

# LC M

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE  
MARCH/APRIL 2013

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The Library and Flickr:  
A Photo Dialogue  
Mary Pickford,  
Queen of the Movies

## PLUS

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- ▶ March Madness, Then & Now
- ▶ A Word from the Poet Laureate

# SUPPORTING CONGRESS

▶ LAWMAKERS AND THEIR LIBRARY







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE

Library of Congress Magazine  
Vol. 2 No. 2: March/April 2013

### MISSION OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The mission of the Library is to support the Congress in fulfilling its constitutional duties and to further the progress of knowledge and creativity for the benefit of the American people.

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This view of the Members Room in the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building features a mosaic panel titled "Law," by Frederick Dielman.  
*Carol Highsmith*

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Actress, producer, entrepreneur and superstar: Mary Pickford influenced the direction of American cinema from its early days.

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Foremost, the Library's mission is to support the Congress in fulfilling its constitutional duties. See how it accomplishes that goal every day.



▲ Sen. Dick Lugar (R-Ind.), center, conducts a ceremonial swearing-in at the Library for three new Members of Congress from Indiana. *Abby Brack Lewis*

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Capitol dome at night.  
*Carol Highsmith*

## CONNECT ON

**Twitter:** @librarycongress

**Youtube:** youtube.com/libraryofcongress

**Facebook:** facebook.com/libraryofcongress

**Flickr:** flickr.com/photo/library\_of\_congress

**Library of Congress blogs:** blogs.loc.gov

**LCM online:** loc.gov/lcm

## THE 113TH CONGRESS BY THE NUMBERS

12,100 INDIVIDUALS HAVE SERVED IN CONGRESS SINCE 1789. BELOW IS A LOOK AT THE 535 MEMBERS OF THE CURRENT CONGRESS.

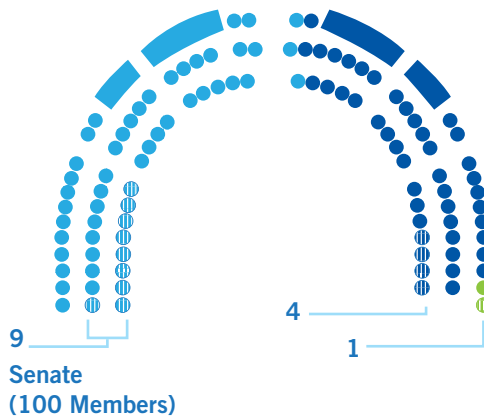
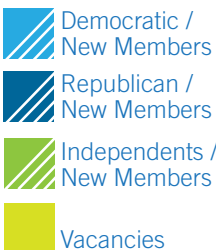
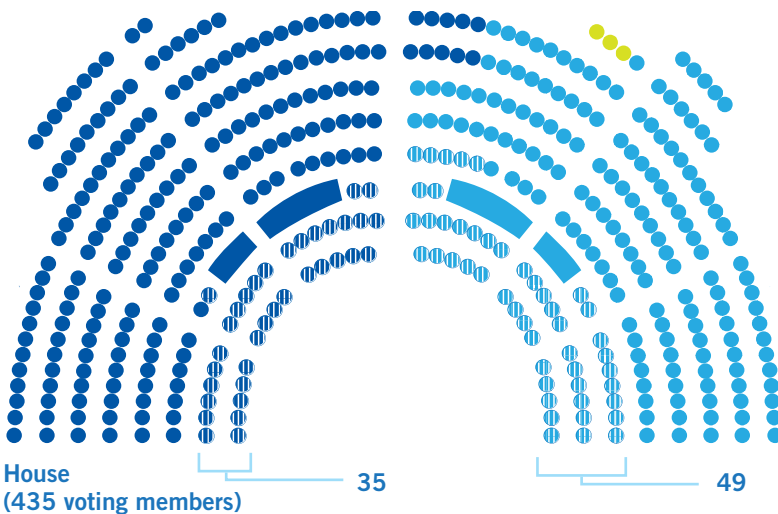


Senate



House

### AVERAGE YEARS IN SERVICE



### MEMBERS' PRIOR OCCUPATIONS AND PUBLICLY HELD OFFICES

#### MEMBERS WHO ARE FORMER EDUCATORS

**102** — 90 in the House  
12 in the Senate

formerly employed as teachers, professors, instructors, school fundraisers, counselors, administrators or coaches

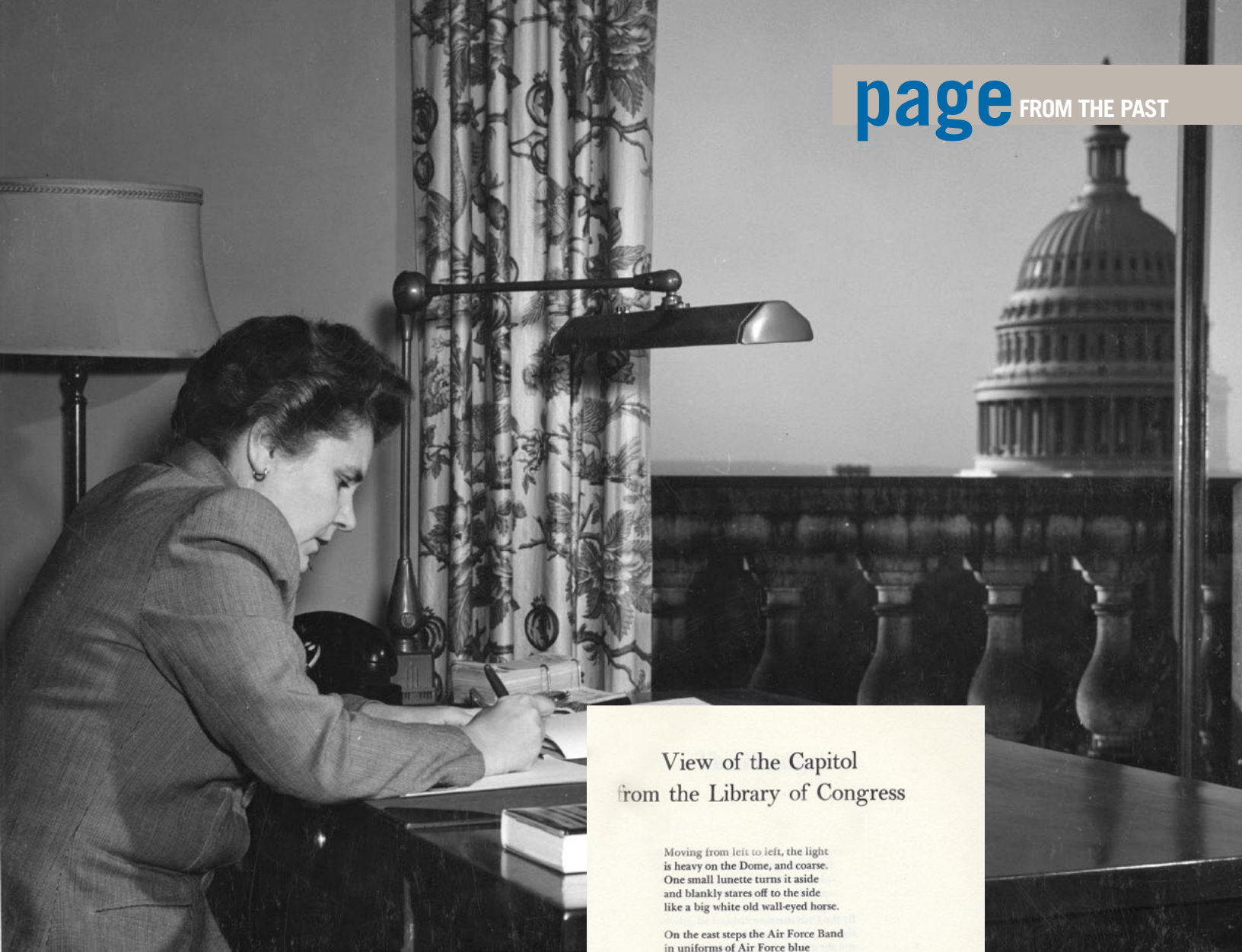
#### EXAMPLES OF PRIOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE

**54** — 33 mayors  
10 state governors  
8 lieutenant governors  
2 Ambassadors  
1 Cabinet Secretary

#### MEMBERS WHO ARE FORMER FARMERS

**28** — 25 in the House  
4 in the Senate  
farmers, ranchers or cattle farm owners





### View of the Capitol from the Library of Congress

Moving from left to left, the light  
is heavy on the Dome, and coarse.  
One small lunette turns it aside  
and blankly stares off to the side  
like a big white old wall-eyed horse.

On the east steps the Air Force Band  
in uniforms of Air Force blue  
is playing hard and loud, but—queer—  
the music doesn't quite come through.

It comes in snatches, dim then keen,  
then mute, and yet there is no breeze.  
The giant trees stand in between.  
I think the trees must intervene,

catching the music in their leaves  
like gold-dust, till each big leaf sags.  
Unceasingly the little flags  
feed their limp stripes into the air,  
and the band's efforts vanish there.

Great shades, edge over,  
give the music room.  
The gathered brasses want to go  
*boom—boom.*

Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979) was the eighth Consultant in Poetry to the Library of Congress. (An act of Congress in 1985 renamed the position Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry). During her tenure (1949-1950) in what is referred to as "poetry's catbird seat," Bishop wrote many poems that were included in her Pulitzer Prize-winning work "Poems: North & South/A Cold Spring," published in 1955. Among them was "View of the Capitol from the Library of Congress," written in the Poetry Room of the Thomas Jefferson Building, which affords this historic vantage point.

#### ► MORE INFORMATION:

[www.loc.gov/poetry/](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/)  
[blogs.loc.gov/catbird/](http://blogs.loc.gov/catbird/)

## CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS ON DEMAND

**VIEWERS CAN WATCH THEIR FAVORITE MOVIES AND TELEVISION PROGRAMS** on demand from their cable and Internet providers. Last year, several offices in the Library of Congress joined forces to make the workings of Congress available on demand too, offering a new service of streaming videos of committee meetings of the U.S. House of Representatives.

While the House Recording Studio controls a sophisticated group of cameras located in several committee rooms, the content had not earlier been released to the general public. When faced with the daunting task of digitizing, archiving and serving the potentially vast amount of video, the House came to the Library for help.

According to Mike Handy, the Library's deputy associate librarian for Library Services, the Office of the Speaker of the House requested the service from the Library based upon its "history of success with video projects, particularly our digital video experience."

Now, concerned citizens may view sessions of the various House committees as they occur, and all committee videos are being transmitted via special fiber-optic lines and archived for future viewing at the Library's Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Va. Researchers and policy aficionados can call up committee meetings from January 2012 to the present.

**► MORE INFORMATION:**

[thomas.loc.gov/video/house-committee/](http://thomas.loc.gov/video/house-committee/)



▲ The public can now view congressional hearings such as this one of the House Armed Services Committee.

## for you AT THE LIBRARY

### LITERARY EVENTS



**WHAT:** Poetry and literary events  
**WHERE:** Various venues at the Library of Congress  
**WHEN:** Year-round  
**COST:** FREE

**THE POETRY AND LITERATURE CENTER** at the Library of Congress fosters and enhances the public's appreciation of literature. The center coordinates an annual literary season of poetry, fiction and drama readings, performances, lectures and symposia, sponsored by the Library's Gertrude Clarke Whittall Poetry and Literature Fund and the Huntington Fund. Many of these may be viewed on the Library's website.

Now in its 75th year, the position of Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry is administered by the center through an endowment from the late Archer M. Huntington. The Poet Laureate suggests authors to read in the literary series and plans other special literary events during the year. Poet Natasha Trethewey is currently serving as the Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry for the 2012-2013 term.



**Poetry and Literature Center** [www.loc.gov/poetry/](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/)  
**View Library events** [www.loc.gov/webcasts/](http://www.loc.gov/webcasts/)



## THE JOE SMITH COLLECTION

### MORE THAN 25 YEARS AGO, RETIRED MUSIC EXECUTIVE JOE SMITH

accomplished a Herculean feat—he got more than 200 celebrated singers, musicians and industry icons to talk about their lives, music, experiences and contemporaries. While president of Capitol Records/EMI, Smith recorded 238 hours of interviews over two years, excerpts of which he compiled and presented in his groundbreaking book, “Off the Record,” published by Warner Books in 1988.

In June 2012, Smith donated this treasure trove of unedited sound recordings to the Library of Congress. Housed in the Library’s Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Va., these primary-source oral histories cover perhaps the most important 50 years of popular music, nationally and internationally.

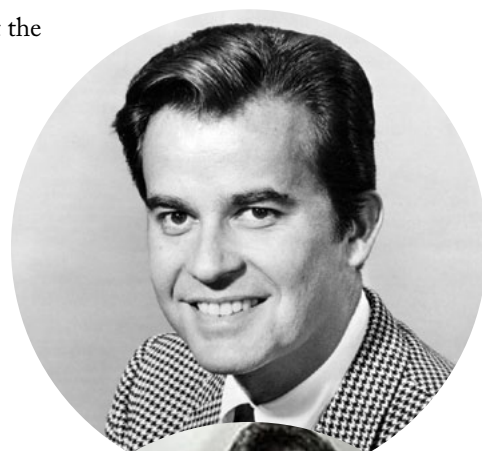
The Library recently made a series of these revealing interviews available for listening free to the public on its website. The first group of 25 recordings posted on the site includes interviews with Tony Bennett, Paul McCartney, Yoko Ono, Ray Charles, B.B. King, Bo Diddley and Linda Ronstadt. More recordings in the Smith collection will be added to the site over time.

Smith’s career in music started in the 1950s at the dawn of the rock ‘n’ roll era. Following his graduation from Yale, Smith worked as a sportscaster and later as a disc jockey at WMEX and WBZ in Boston. He transitioned into record promotions when he moved to Los Angeles in 1960 and rose to legendary status in the industry as president of three major labels—Warner Bros., Elektra/Asylum and Capitol/EMI.

#### ► MORE INFORMATION:

[www.loc.gov/rr/record/joesmith/](http://www.loc.gov/rr/record/joesmith/)

◀ From top: Mick Jagger, Natalie Cole, Dick Clark and Bo Diddley were among the music industry greats interviewed by recording executive Joe Smith (bottom left). *Mick Jagger, Natalie Cole, courtesy photos; Dick Clark, Dick Clark Productions; Bo Diddley, Chess Records; Joe Smith, courtesy of Sandy Gibson*



ONCE CONSIDERED A PILOT PROJECT, THE LIBRARY'S EFFORTS TO PROVIDE ONLINE ACCESS TO ITS COLLECTIONS HAVE MADE ITS WEBSITE AN UNPARALLELED RESOURCE TO CONGRESS AND THE WORLD. CHIEF OF WEB SERVICES JIM KARAMANIS DESCRIBES HIS JOB.

## JIM KARAMANIS

### How did you prepare for your position here?

I worked for years building commercial websites as a programmer, developer, architect and team leader. Work in the private sector can be very exciting and fast-paced, as companies are focused on the bottom line rather than on the long term. And while it's exciting, it's not exactly fulfilling. I originally came to the Library almost 10 years ago in a technical role on a short-term project. Working with the Library's content and making its incredible information available to the public is far more fulfilling than helping any company sell products or services.

### How would you describe your work at the Library?

My team—which includes experienced professionals in information architecture, design, programming, quality assurance and management—is responsible for the public web presence of the entire Library. And a big part of that job is to work with the content creators, collectors and preservers in each Library division to help them with their individual missions, which are all part of the Library's broader mission.

### How has the Library's web presence changed over the years?

When I first came here, online content was not being presented in a uniform manner. Each office was doing its own thing, working independently. While the Library was an incredible pioneer in making millions of items accessible online, it was difficult to understand the mission of the Library by looking at the website and even harder to find any specific content.

Over the past few years, Library management has advanced a comprehensive project to unify and update its web presence. It's not only a big project from a technology perspective—we're one of the world's largest websites—but it represents a total change in the way the Library thinks about its business process. The web can't be an afterthought. It's got to be considered at



Abby Brack Lewis

the beginning of every business process. This is a huge change – especially for an institution that has been around for a couple hundred years.

And as we roll out the new features—from the improved web searching capability to the new Photos and Maps subsites to the Congress.gov service—the staff and public responses have been equally exciting.

### Have you had any other favorite projects?

A few years back, we launched the Library of Congress Experience, where we added interactive kiosks to exhibition areas in the Jefferson Building. We created a way for patrons of the library to connect digitally with the content that they were viewing in a museum setting. To see people using the systems right in front of you, the excitement and joy on their faces—people of all ages, children with their grandparents, each interacting with both the kiosk and the actual artifact—that was something that I've never experienced before in my career.

### How is the Library different from other places you've worked?

When I came here, it was to help an organization with a technical issue. I didn't know a lot about the Library of Congress. What I found was the most unbelievable treasure trove of knowledge in the entire world, and I've also found a home. This place, its mission and its content are absolutely intoxicating. I never dreamed my career would bring me to a place like this, where you can bring friends and family from all over the country into an amazing space like the Great Hall of the Jefferson Building, and feel so proud and lucky to work in such a place.

### PERSONAL NOTE

Jim is a fan of classic cars (particularly the Mercury Cougar) and races a vintage 1972 Ford Pinto. "I was fortunate to escort world champion racing driver Mario Andretti when he came to the Library to be inducted as a Living Legend."



## MARCH MADNESS

**THIS SPRING, BASKETBALL CELEBRATES A MILESTONE**—the 75th anniversary of “March Madness,” the annual National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 basketball series. For both men’s and women’s basketball, these tournaments determine the national champions of college basketball. In 1938, Ohio State University coach Harold Olsen conceived the idea, and the following year the first tournament was staged, with Oregon defeating Ohio State, 46–33.

The history of basketball is well-documented in the Library’s collections. The game was invented in 1891 at the YMCA Training Center in Springfield, Mass., by Canadian-American sports coach James Naismith, who founded the University of Kansas basketball program. The game gained popularity as a college sport for men and women. The Library’s “Today in History” web page notes that on Jan. 16, 1896, the first unofficial college basketball game was played between the University of Iowa and the University of Chicago—with five players on each side. Chicago won by a score of 15–12.

The Library of Congress photographic collections contain various nods to the sport, dating to the turn of the last century. The Prints and Photographs Online Catalog includes many action shots such as an airborne Bill Russell, of the University of San Francisco Dons, sinking a basket against Southern Methodist University in the semifinals of the 1956 NCAA tournament.

The holdings of the Library’s Recorded Sound Section include radio highlights from games of the late 1940s and 1950s and more extensive radio and television coverage from the 1960s, featuring future NBA greats such as Jerry Lucas, Gail Goodrich, Bob Lanier, Bill Bradley and Kareem Abdul Jabbar. Two recent acquisitions—the John Miley Sports Broadcast Collection and the Sports Byline Collection—capture some rare moments in sports history.

### FACT:

After attending a state basketball finals game in Indiana in 1925, the game’s inventor, James Naismith, said, “Basketball really had its origin in Indiana, which remains the center of the sport.”

“Hoosier Hysteria” is what they call the annual high school basketball tournament in Indiana—a state that has produced thousands of first-rate basketball players and boasts five NCAA championships. Hoosier Hysteria is documented in the Library’s American Folklife Center collections as part of the Local Legacies project that was launched in 2000 to recognize events and customs throughout the nation during the Library’s bicentennial celebration. The collection, which was submitted to the Library by

Indiana Sen. Richard G. Lugar, chronicles the significant events, teams and moments in Indiana high school basketball history through videos, photographs, newspaper clippings and other memorabilia.

—Erin Allen



▲ Women’s basketball team, Milton High School, Milton, N.D., 1909. *Fred Hultstrand History in Pictures Collection, American Memory collection*

James Naismith, photograph of a 1941 oil painting by Lon Keller. *Prints and Photographs Division*

Bill Russell of the San Francisco Dons sinks a basket in the 1956 NCAA semifinals. *Prints and Photographs Division*

# THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS AND FLICKR

## A PHOTO DIALOGUE

BY JOHN SAYERS

IN ONE OF ITS FIRST EXPERIMENTS IN SOCIAL MEDIA, THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS ENGAGED A NEW AUDIENCE FOR ITS INCOMPARABLE COLLECTIONS ON A POPULAR PHOTO-SHARING WEBSITE.



### BAT ROOST

▲ Photos in the Library's Bain Collection of news images from the early 1900s had very little caption or contextual information. The Flickr community has enthusiastically helped identify images and people, such as the man in this photo of a municipal bat roost, Charles Augustus Rosenheimer Campbell, who championed the roosts to help fight disease-carrying mosquitos. Ca. 1910-1915. Bain Collection [flickr.com/photos/library\\_of\\_congress/8252711412](https://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/8252711412)

Five years ago, the Library's Prints and Photographs Division embarked on an experiment to post photographs from its collections on the photo-sharing site, Flickr. The goals were twofold: share images with a community of picture lovers who were not familiar with the Library's website or who may not have known that libraries collect pictures; and tap viewers' knowledge to help improve access to images for which the Library had little information.

What the Library didn't know for sure was whether anyone would be interested. Would anybody tag or comment on the photos? Would they even notice them?

They noticed. Flickr users immediately began viewing the photo sets from the first half of the 20th century that were posted on a weekly basis. Comments—awe-struck, funny and informative—began to flood in, and Flickr members flocked to the site to tag the Library's photos.

Viewers took advantage of Flickr's visually oriented "note" tool to point out particular details of the photographs, and commenters offered connections to related images and resources that helped explain the pictures.

Further, viewers saw connections to their own lives. Flickr members have found family members through the photographs. They've helped commemorate individuals whose stories aren't well known but deserve to be remembered. They've solved mysteries and they've helped Library curators appreciate the technology and art of photography.

In the years since, the Library has branched out to other collections and types of images, including illustrated newspaper supplements, portraits of jazz musicians and New Deal-era Works Progress Administration(WPA) posters.

"We have also made many new friends through our online conversations about the pictures," said Helena Zinkham, chief of the Library's Prints and Photographs Division.

*Barbara Natanson in the Prints and Photographs Division and Michelle Springer in the Web Services Division contributed to this article.*



## THE COMMONS ON FLICKR

With the launch of the Library of Congress pilot, Flickr began a new initiative called “The Commons.” Cultural heritage institutions that join The Commons share images from their photographic collections that have no known copyright restrictions as a way to increase awareness of these collections with the general public.

Since the Flickr Commons launched on Jan. 16, 2008, more than 250,000 photographs with no known copyright restrictions have been contributed by 56 libraries, archives and museums worldwide, with new images added each week.

The Library’s leadership role as the founding member of the Flickr Commons project was repeatedly lauded as fans celebrated its fifth anniversary on Jan. 16, 2013. To mark the occasion, libraries, archives and museums participating in The Commons sent links to their most popular images. The resulting five galleries of images have received almost 75,000 views since their launch.



### SYLVIA SWEETS

▲ Once only known as “street in industrial town in Massachusetts,” this lively scene from the corner of School and Main Streets in Brockton, Mass., was identified by Flickr members including the daughter of the Greek immigrants who ran the Sylvia Sweets Tea Room.

*Jack Delano, ca. 1940-41, FSA-OWI Collection [flickr.com/photos/library\\_of\\_congress/2178249475](https://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/2178249475)*



### AIRCRAFT WORKER

◀ This “Rosie the Riveter” photo from the Vega Aircraft Corp., Burbank, Calif., in 1944 is the all-time favorite Library of Congress photo of Flickr users, with just under 3,000 “favorite” designations and nearly 300 comments.

*David Bransby, FSA-OWI Collection [flickr.com/photos/library\\_of\\_congress/2179930812](https://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/2179930812)*

### ▶ MORE INFORMATION:

#### Photos at the Library of Congress

[loc.gov/pictures/](https://www.loc.gov/pictures/)

#### The Library of Congress on Flickr

[flickr.com/photos/library\\_of\\_congress/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/library_of_congress/)

#### The Commons on Flickr

[flickr.com/commons](https://www.flickr.com/commons)

#### “Flickr Commons, Happy 5th Birthday”

[blogs.loc.gov/picturethis/2013/01/flickr-commons-happy-5th-birthday/](https://blogs.loc.gov/picturethis/2013/01/flickr-commons-happy-5th-birthday/)



# MARY PICKFORD

## QUEEN OF THE MOVIES

BY CHRISTEL SCHMIDT

Actress Mary Pickford was cinema's first great star and became one of the film industry's most influential figures during the early 20th century.





**I**t has been 100 years since Mary Pickford was first dubbed the Queen of the Movies. At the time, the phrase simply noted her popularity in the huge field of actors who appeared in short films shown at nickelodeons. Though it was a gratifying compliment, the title had inherently ignoble associations. After all, most people considered the movies to be a low form of entertainment. Pickford winced at the label, but it was remarkably prophetic of her future triumphs.

As the movies expanded to feature length, Pickford's skyrocketing fame created box-office gold; meanwhile, her widely heralded acting prowess advanced the medium's quest for respectability. In 1915 Pickford formed her own corporation and began hardball negotiations with her studio, Famous Players. This led to a landmark film contract the following year, in which Pickford received her own production unit, a strong creative voice in the making of her movies, and a salary rivaled only by that of Charlie Chaplin. Just two years later, she left Famous Players for First National in a deal that gave her complete creative control and more money. Then, with the ink barely dry on her contract, she became involved in plans to form a new company, United Artists, which she cofounded with Chaplin, actor Douglas Fairbanks, and director D. W. Griffith in 1919.

From 1910 to 1920, the fervor of Pickford's massive fan base never wavered. In fact, the craze amplified, especially when the Queen of the Movies—a title that now defined her position as both an industry leader and a superstar—married Fairbanks. As Hollywood's most popular leading man, Fairbanks was a king in his own right, and he shared Pickford's passion for filmmaking. The pair became the first celebrity supercouple; their movies spread American culture and values around the world and made them the nation's unofficial ambassadors. During their international travels, they were coveted guests of royalty, presidents, and prime ministers. At home, they ruled Hollywood from Pickfair, their Beverly Hills mansion, which became a social center for the cultural elite.

◀ Mary Pickford with a movie camera in 1916. *Prints and Photographs Division*



By the mid-1920s, newer and younger stars were challenging Pickford's box-office supremacy. Several—including Clara Bow, Colleen Moore, and Gloria Swanson—temporarily won the mantle of movie queen, but Pickford remained an enduring favorite. Then, suddenly, the industry underwent a radical change: silent film was out and the talkies were in. Within a few years, most of the era's great stars had toppled from their lofty positions, and Pickford's acting career and marriage faltered. During the Depression, she sought refuge in new ventures—forming a cosmetics company, performing on radio and writing books. These projects met with varying success, but none captured her soul as the movies had.

▲ A 1917 publicity photo features Mary Pickford and Charlie Chaplin on the shoulders of Douglas Fairbanks. *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*

Promotional flyer for "The Hoodlum," 1919. *Prints and Photographs Collection*





1



2



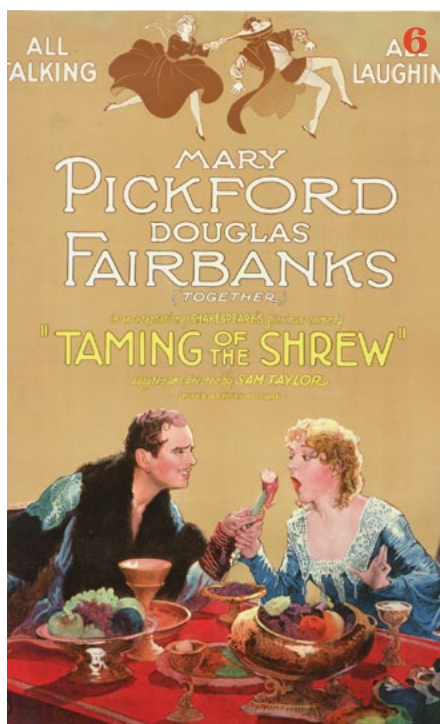
3



4



5



6

1. Mary Pickford promotes a fundraising raffle for the Motion Picture Relief Fund. *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*

2. The cover of the March 1923 issue of McCall's features Mary Pickford. *Prints and Photographs Division*

3. Mary Pickford promotes her 1935 novel, "The Demi-Widow." *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*

4. Poster for the 1923 film "Rosita" with Mary Pickford in the title role. *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*

5. A scene from Mary Pickford's "Tess of the Storm Country," 1922. *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*

6. Poster for "Taming of the Shrew," the only feature Pickford and Fairbanks starred in together. *Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*



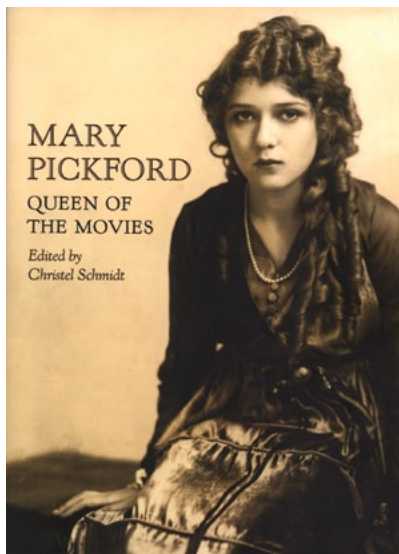
Though Pickford continued to work with United Artists and occasionally produced films for other people, nothing matched the thrill of creating her own. A decade of professional disappointment was matched by profound personal losses; her mother, Charlotte, died in 1928, followed by her younger siblings, Jack and Lottie, in 1933 and 1936, respectively. Fairbanks died in 1939. These painful events exacerbated a growing struggle with alcohol that plagued her until the end of her life.

Meanwhile, Pickford's on- and off-screen achievements were fading from memory. Silent film, an art form she had helped pioneer and later dominated, was considered archaic. Fearing ridicule, Pickford did not allow her work to be exhibited in the rare revival screenings of silent films. Unfortunately, this lack of access prevented generations of moviegoers from discovering her work and allowed a distorted view of her movies to take hold.

The centenary in 2009 of Pickford's first movie appearance prompted the publication in 2012 of "Mary Pickford: Queen of the Movies"—a celebration of one of early cinema's key figures. In a series of insightful essays, Pickford scholars (past and present) delve into her onscreen persona, her impact on modern celebrity culture, and her transformation from popular actress to national icon. Her frequent turns in nonwhite roles and as teenagers are explored, as is the glorification of the Pickford curls and her companionate marriage to Fairbanks. Other pieces

examine her role as a Hollywood philanthropist and her interest in the fledgling archival film movement and the preservation of her film legacy.

Pickford's life and career are illuminated by the presentation in the book of more than 235 images and illustrations. Most are from the personal collections of films and photographs she donated to the Library of Congress and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, respectively. Her collection of costumes and other memorabilia, housed at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, is also showcased. Together, these magnificent images and revealing essays offer a fascinating portrait of a brilliant woman whose influence on the film industry remains unmatched.



▲ Published by the Library of Congress in association with the University of Kentucky Press, "Mary Pickford: Queen of the Movies" is available for \$45 through the Library of Congress Shop, 888.682.3557 or [www.loc.gov/shop/](http://www.loc.gov/shop/).

*Christel Schmidt is the editor of "Mary Pickford: Queen of the Movies" and co-editor of "Silent Movies: The Birth of Film and the Triumph of Movie Culture" and an associate of the Library's Publishing Office.*

#### ► MORE INFORMATION:

[www.loc.gov/avconservation/](http://www.loc.gov/avconservation/)

Christel Schmidt will discuss Mary Pickford's career at film screening events to be held at more than 25 venues nationwide. For a complete schedule, go to [www.loc.gov/publish/general/events.html](http://www.loc.gov/publish/general/events.html).

## THE PICKFORD COLLECTION

As a producer and distributor, Mary Pickford owned many of the prints and negatives of her films. She donated her collection to the Library of Congress in 1946. The Library over time acquired more of her works through copyright deposit, repatriation from European archives and from private collectors. Today, it holds 156 of the estimated 210 films Pickford made between 1909 and 1933 (36 are considered lost). The collection is housed at the Library's Packard Campus for Audio Visual Conservation in Culpeper, Va.

The collection also contains a fascinating assortment of films that reveal Pickford off-script—color home movies of a vacation with husband Douglas Fairbanks in Mexico; behind-the-scenes footage on movie sets; Pickford promoting government bonds during World War I. The heart of the collection is her work for Biograph—a collection of 107 films, mostly one-reelers.

Over the next year, the Library will undertake a title-by-title re-examination of its Pickford Collection—the largest collection of her works and one of the most important film collections in the world. The Library has restored many of Pickford's films—five were restored for the 2009 centennial of her acting career. However, some of the restoration work was done nearly 50 years ago and can be improved upon with new technology. The goal is to evaluate what the collection contains, what has been done to preserve it and what remains to be done to ensure that the collection is restored and accessible to the public. This may include locating footage in other archives to restore incomplete films to their original state.

Some new discoveries may be made, such as Christel Schmidt's discovery of the only known color footage of President William Howard Taft, which was spliced onto one of Pickford's films.

"You never know when you start looking what you'll find," Schmidt said.







# SUPPORTING CONGRESS

## LAWMAKERS AND THEIR LIBRARY

BY MARK HARTSELL

THE LIBRARY'S MISSION IS TO SUPPORT THE CONGRESS IN FULFILLING ITS CONSTITUTIONAL DUTIES AND TO FURTHER THE PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE AND CREATIVITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

By the time voters went to the polls in November, analysts in the Library's Congressional Research Service (CRS) were hard at work researching the key public-policy issues the newly elected representatives and senators likely would face when they convened on Capitol Hill nearly three months later.

The analysts in the Library's Congressional Research Service identified roughly 160 such issues—from health care at home to political upheaval in the Middle East—and prepared research and reports that would be ready for use by the 113th Congress in the upcoming legislative session.

The research conducted by those analysts is but one service among many the Library provides to directly assist Congress in the performance of its legislative work. The Library offers members of Congress and their staffs a wide range of other support—legal research; guidance on important copyright issues; maps of global hot spots; expert, bicameral seminars on policy issues; information technology support; and, every two years, even the Bibles and bound copies of the Constitution newly elected members use in swearing-in ceremonies.

An act of Congress, signed by President John Adams, established the Library in 1800 to provide “such books as may be necessary for the use of Congress.” Today's Library still provides Congress with books—more than 30,000 volumes circulated to the House and Senate in the last fiscal year—but it serves in many other ways as well.

“The U.S. Congress created this amazing library,” said Librarian of Congress James H. Billington. “For this, the Congress, past and present, deserves the most heartfelt thanks of all of us.”

## LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT

The research, analysis, seminars and programs produced by CRS provide Congress with a nonpartisan, confidential resource that helps members navigate the legislative process and address important, complex issues. Last year, CRS responded to about 700,000 congressional reference requests, delivered to Congress more than 1 million research products and offered a cadre of seminars and briefings.

CRS, for example, conducts a three-day orientation that provides newly elected members of the House with an overview of priority issues on the legislative agenda, legislative procedure and the budget process. The service also conducts programs that support Congress once the session gets underway—seminars, for example, that give members and their staffs the chance to meet with experts on a wide range of issues in an informal, confidential setting.

CRS has but one mission: Serve Congress in the performance of its work.

Similarly, service to Congress remains the Law Library's first priority. Congress established the Law Library of Congress in 1832 with the mission of making its resources available to Congress and the Supreme Court—a mission that expanded over time to include other branches of government and the global legal community. Librarians and lawyers respond to congressional inquiries about U.S., foreign, comparative, and international legal and legislative research, drawing upon the world's largest collection of law books and legal resources—more than 5 million items that span legal systems around the globe. Last year, the Law Library provided members of Congress with more than 300 in-depth reports, along with nonpartisan analysis and in-person consultations.

The Law Library's legal reference librarians assist congressional and CRS staff any time either



▲ In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, CRS held an open house for members and congressional staff to help address constituents' needs and concerns. *Robert H. Nickel*



chamber of Congress is in session, no matter the hour. Law Library and CRS staff engage members of Congress through social media—RSS feeds, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs—on legal developments and course offerings.

## INFORMATION SERVICES

The Library brings together its unique combination of technical and congressional process expertise to provide Congress with a variety of information technology services.

The Law Library and CRS, working with the Library's web services experts, maintain THOMAS, the Internet-accessible database that makes legislative information—bills, resolutions, treaties and the Congressional Record—available to Congress and the public. Congress.gov, a beta website operated jointly by the Library of Congress, the House, the Senate and the other legislative branch sources, provides the same information through mobile devices and eventually will replace THOMAS. The Law Library responds to all queries related to THOMAS and the Congress.gov beta site.

"Since the launch of the public legislative information system known as THOMAS in 1995, Congress has relied on the Library to make the work of Congress available to the public in a coherent, comprehensive way," said Rep. Gregg Harper (R-Miss.) at the September 2012 launch of the Congress.gov beta site. "The Library staff has a strong working relationship with the House, Senate and the Government Printing Office, which will enable the Library to successfully develop the next generation legislative information website."

Working with its legislative branch data partners, the Library launched a Congressional Record app on Jan. 16, 2012, and, on the following day, broadcast the first House committee hearing as part of a new streaming video project. Through the Congressional Cartography Program, the Geography and Map Division produces geospatial products for congressional offices and committees.

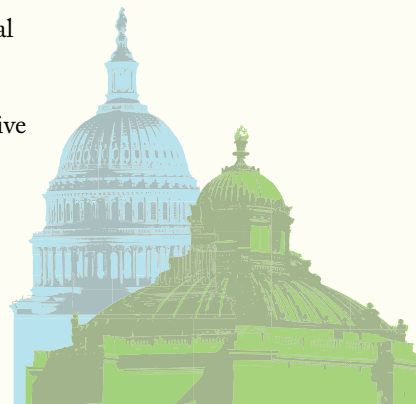


▲ Register of Copyrights Maria Pallante (left) testifies before a congressional subcommittee on intellectual property rights and the Internet. *Cecelia Rogers*

## COPYRIGHT ISSUES

The Library of Congress also is home to the U.S. Copyright Office, where creators like Scott Turow and Taylor Swift and studios such as DreamWorks register books, songs or films for copyright to protect their rights as creators—more than 510,000 such claims were registered in fiscal 2012.

The register of copyrights—the director of the Copyright Office—also serves as the principal adviser to Congress on copyright issues. As such, the register works with the Senate and House Judiciary committees and with individual members to provide advice and technical expertise on copyright law and policy and to develop recommendations for potential legislative discussions in the future. The register also provides expert testimony before Congress and its committees.





▲ Curator Ed Redmond (left) shows items from the Geography and Map Division collections to (from left, at table) Reps. Gregg Harper (R-Miss.), Leonard Lance (R-N.J.) and Rush Holt (D-N.J.).  
*Abby Brack Lewis*

## CONGRESS COMES TO THE LIBRARY

The Library's three Capitol Hill buildings, all located within a block of the U.S. Capitol, frequently serve as meeting and event venues for members, including events in conjunction with the start of each new Congress. The Library provided space for more than 85 events for members in the last fiscal year: staff retreats, panel discussions, meetings with foreign legislators, luncheons, concerts and receptions.

The Congressional Relations Office, the primary point of contact between the Library and Congress, helps manage those congressional events and other services. Last year the office hosted nearly 500 visits by members and facilitated tours for more than 84,000 constituents referred by 466 congressional offices.

The Congressional Relations Office also runs programs that provide service to constituents

back home. For example, the office worked with more than 150 members of Congress last year to send surplus books to local libraries, schools and museums. Through another program, the office helped congressional staff teach educators in their home districts how to use the Library's vast online resources in their own classrooms. Last year, the Library trained more than 27,000 teachers from 378 congressional districts to use primary sources in the classroom.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), co-chair with Rep. Robert Aderholt (R-Ala.) of the Library's Congressional Caucus, paid tribute in a November floor statement to the service the Library provides in helping Congress perform its constitutional duties. "Perhaps one of the best parts of serving in Congress is the access to our Library, the Library of Congress, the dedicated staff at CRS, and the magnificent Members Reading Room," Blumenauer said. "The Library of Congress is truly a national treasure."

*Mark Hartsell is editor of The Gazette, the Library's staff newspaper.*





## PRESERVING THE NATION'S HERITAGE

Congress, the greatest patron of a library in human history, supports its library's efforts to acquire, preserve and provide access to America's record of creativity and knowledge. Congress has turned to the nation's library on numerous occasions with visionary directives for recording and preserving America's heritage.

In its concern for preserving the nation's audiovisual heritage, Congress enacted the National Film Preservation Act in 1988 and the National Recording Preservation Act in 2000. These acts directed the Librarian of Congress to select "culturally, historically or aesthetically" significant films and sound recordings, respectively, for preservation. To date, 600 films and 350 sound recordings have been selected for preservation. The legislation also called on the Librarian of Congress to implement a comprehensive national sound recording preservation plan. The plan was released in February 2013.

Established by Congress in 2000, the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP) seeks to collect and preserve at-risk digital content of cultural and historical importance. Under the auspices of the Library's Office of Strategic Initiatives, NDIIPP has grown to a decentralized network of 200 national and international partners with stewardship for more than 1,400 digital collections working to preserve born-digital records and to establish standards for digital preservation.

That same year, Congress established the Veterans History Project in the Library's American Folklife Center. The project preserves the memories of those in our nation's armed services and others who shared America's wartime experience in the 20th and early 21st centuries. To date, the project has collected more than 83,000 recollections from across the nation. In 2009, Congress directed the Library and the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture to preserve and collect oral history collections with relevance to the Civil Rights Movement.

### ► MORE INFORMATION:

[www.loc.gov/film/](http://www.loc.gov/film/)  
[www.loc.gov/rr/record/nrpb/](http://www.loc.gov/rr/record/nrpb/)  
[www.digitalpreservation.gov/](http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/)  
[www.loc.gov/vets/](http://www.loc.gov/vets/)  
[www.loc.gov/folklife/civilrights/](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/civilrights/)



hold their offices for a term sufficient to ensure their independency, to receive liberal  
 emolument, by which they may be compensated for the devotion of their time to public service,  
 and to be ineligible to any office established by a particular State, or under the authority of  
 the United States, except those peculiarly belonging to the functions of the second branch, dur-  
 ing the term of service, and for the space of years after their expiration thereof.

6. Resolved that each branch ought to possess the right of originating  
 bills, that the national legislature ought to be empowered to enjoy the legislative rights  
 vested in Congress by the Confederation, & moreover to legislate in all cases to which the  
 separate States are incompetent, or in which the harmony of the United States may be inter-  
 ferred by the exercise of individual legislation; to negative all laws passed by the se-  
 veral States, contravening in the opinion of the National Legislature the interests of Union;  
 and to call forth the force of the Union against any member of the Union failing to ful-  
 fill its duty under the articles thereof.

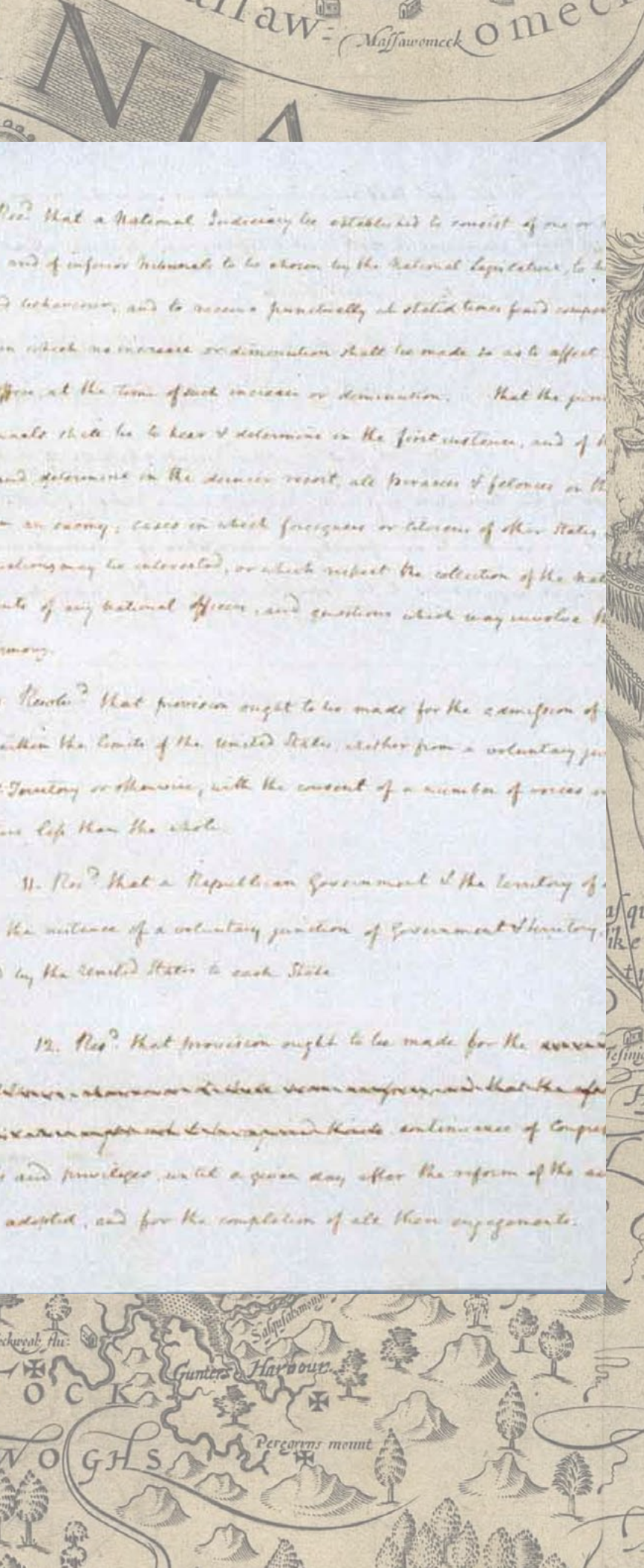
7. Res<sup>d</sup> that a national Executive be instituted, to be chosen by  
 the National Legislature for the term of years, to receive personally at stated  
 times a fixed compensation for the services rendered, in which no increase or diminution  
 shall be made so as to affect the Magistracy, existing at the time of increase or diminution,  
 to be ineligible a second time, and that besides a general authority to execute the  
 national laws it ought to enjoy the Executive rights vested in Congress by the Confed-  
 eration.

8. Res<sup>d</sup> that the Executive and a convenient number of the  
 national Judiciary, ought to compose a Council of revision with authority to examine  
 every act of the National Legislature before it shall operate, & every act of a particular  
 Legislature before a negative shall be final, and that the dissent of the said  
 Council shall amount to a rejection, unless the act of the National Legislature be again  
 passed, or that of a particular Legislature be again ratified by the members of each  
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"The Virginia Plan of Government," Notes of Debates in the Federal Constitutional Convention, May 29, 1787. James Madison Papers, Manuscript Division





## CREATING THE CONSTITUTION

America's search for a plan of national government was a slow, difficult process. Compromise, cooperation, and creativity were required as the Americans moved from being colonials under British rule to citizen-leaders in a representative republic of federal states. Most of this process took place in the midst of a long, revolutionary war.

Following the American Revolution, the newly founded country of the United States had to create a new government to replace the British Parliament against which it rebelled. The Continental Congress, the governing body of the United States during the Revolution, adopted the Articles of Confederation—the first constitution of the United States—on Nov. 15, 1777. The 13 founding states did not ratify them until March 1, 1781. The Articles created a loose confederation of sovereign states and a weak central government, leaving most of the power with the state governments.

Divisions among the states threatened to destroy the victory achieved by the Revolution. Nationalists, led by James Madison, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, John Jay and James Wilson, began working toward strengthening the federal government. They called for a Constitutional Convention to revise the Articles of Confederation. The convention took place in Philadelphia from May 25 to Sept. 17, 1787. After much debate and many revisions, the Constitution was ratified on June 21, 1788, and implemented on March 4, 1789. With the ratification in 1791 of the Bill of Rights (the first 10 amendments to the Constitution) and an additional 17 amendments, the Constitution remains the supreme law of the land.

James Madison is hailed as the “Father of the Constitution” for being instrumental in the drafting of the U.S. Constitution and as the key champion of the Bill of Rights. Madison wrote what became known as the Virginia Plan, a proposal by Virginia delegates to the Constitutional Convention that called for proportional representation in a bicameral (two-house) legislature and a strong national government with veto power over state laws. The Virginia Plan was submitted at the opening of the convention, and served as an outline for a possible constitution. While extensively changed during the Constitutional Convention, the Virginia Plan was central to the debate.

### ► MORE INFORMATION:

#### Virginia Plan

[myloc.gov/Exhibitions/creatingtheus/Constitution/Ratification/ExhibitObjects/TheVirginiaPlan.aspx](http://myloc.gov/Exhibitions/creatingtheus/Constitution/Ratification/ExhibitObjects/TheVirginiaPlan.aspx)

#### “Creating the United States” exhibition

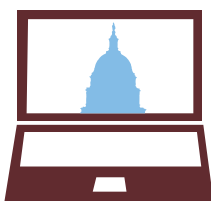
<http://myloc.gov/exhibitions/creatingtheus/Pages/default.aspx>

#### Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/continental/>



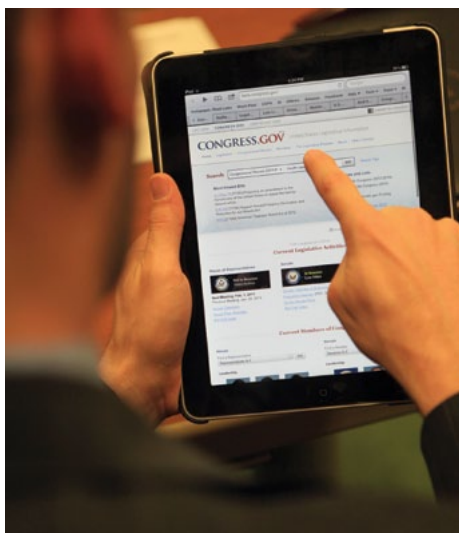
## WHAT'S IN CONGRESS.GOV?



Congress.gov debuted with congressional member profiles and major actions, summaries and full texts of bills (2001-present). The Congressional Record—transcripts of the proceedings and debates of the U.S. Congress—and Congressional Budget Office cost estimates were added this January. Additional information will be added approximately quarterly.

# FIND LEGISLATION IN CONGRESS.GOV

Approximately 400,000 unique visitors have visited the Congress.gov beta site since its release in September 2012.



Abby Brack Lewis

**CONGRESS.GOV IS A NEW PUBLIC BETA WEBSITE** for accessing free, fact-based legislative information. The site, which was launched on Sept. 19, 2012, was developed by the Library of Congress in collaboration with the U.S. Senate, the House of Representatives and the Government Printing Office. Congress.gov eventually will replace the THOMAS.gov legislative information system once all the data from the legacy system has been fully migrated to the new system.

## GO TO CONGRESS.GOV USING YOUR MOBILE DEVICE OR YOUR COMPUTER.

Search by bill number, member of Congress, committee, subject term, word or phrase.

The search results provide key information about the bill, such as a tracker to show how far a bill has progressed in the legislative process.

Bill numbers link to even more information, such as bill summaries and texts, major actions, titles, amendments, cosponsors and committees.

## OR

You can also find the finding aids on the Congress.gov homepage, if you don't know the bill number.

These include: most-viewed bills, bills introduced in the current Congress, laws enacted, active legislation and a list of current appropriations bills.

— Kimberly Ferguson is a specialist in legislative information systems in the Congressional Research Service.

## ► MORE INFORMATION:

View a series of videos that explain the legislative process  
[beta.congress.gov/legislative-process/](http://beta.congress.gov/legislative-process/)

For help with a Congress.gov search  
[www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-law.html](http://www.loc.gov/rr/askalib/ask-law.html)





Abby Brack Lewis

► MORE INFORMATION:

Virtual tour of the Poetry Room

[www.loc.gov/poetry/poetryroom/](http://www.loc.gov/poetry/poetryroom/)

## THE POETRY ROOM

**THE POETRY ROOM**, located on the top floor of the Thomas Jefferson Building, commands one of the best views of the city—overlooking the west front of the U.S. Capitol, continuing to the Washington Monument and beyond to Virginia. The space is the home of the Library’s Poetry and Literature Center, which includes a small working office for the resident Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry, in addition to the elegant Poetry Room.





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**1.** Rep. Joyce Beatty (D-Ohio) speaks to her supporters at a reception held at the Library in her honor. All photos except where noted | *Abby Brack Lewis*

**2.** House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) conducts a ceremonial swearing-in for Rep. Rush Holt (D-N.J.) at the Library of Congress. *Brian Williams*

**3.** On his last day in office, Sen. Dick Lugar (R-Ind.), center, conducts a ceremonial swearing-in at the Library for three new Republican Members of Congress from Indiana. Taking the oath on a Bible from the Library's collection are, from left, Rep. Luke Messer, Rep. Jackie Walorski and Rep. Susan Brooks.

**4.** Newly elected Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) (left) chats with Sen. Al Franken (D-Minn.) at an event for Heinrich in the Members Room.

**5.** Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.) greets Librarian of Congress James H. Billington in the Great Hall during a reception for House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio).

**6.** Carolin Quandt, a volunteer in the Young Readers Center, reads to the young family members of Rep. Kerry Bentivolio (R-Mich.). *Mary Bucknum*



6



## \$1.5 MILLION GIFT TO SUPPORT LITERACY

David Rubenstein, a co-founder of the Carlyle Group and major donor to the Library of Congress, will contribute \$1.5 million per year to fund three new Library of Congress literacy awards over five years. The announcement was made at the first-ever International Summit of the Book, held at the Library Dec. 6-7.

The trio of annual awards will include the David M. Rubenstein Prize for a groundbreaking contribution to the sustained advancement of literacy by any individual or entity worldwide; the American Prize, honoring a project developed and deployed in the United States during the preceding decade with special emphasis on combating illiteracy; and the International Prize, which would honor the outstanding work of an individual, a nation or a non-governmental organization (NGO) working in a specific country or region. The application deadline is April 15, 2013. The winners will be announced at the second annual International Summit of the Book in Singapore on Aug. 16, 2013.

► **MORE:** [www.loc.gov/today/pr/2012/12-221.html](http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2012/12-221.html)

► **APPLICATION INFORMATION:** [www.read.gov/literacyawards](http://www.read.gov/literacyawards)

## BOOKS THAT SHAPED AMERICA ON BOOKSELLER AMAZON

Amazon will offer a special collection of “Books That Shaped America” on its website, based on the Library’s list of works by authors that provoked thought, controversy and change through American history. As part of its multi-year “Celebration of the Book,” the Library’s announcement of the list—initially 88 books—and its accompanying exhibition at the Library, June 25 through Sept. 29, engendered much public comment. As a result, another dozen books were added at the end of 2012. Amazon will offer these titles for sale both in physical form and as downloadable e-books.

► **MORE:** [www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/13-005.html](http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/13-005.html)

► **MORE:** [myloc.gov/exhibitions/books-that-shaped-america/pages/default.aspx](http://myloc.gov/exhibitions/books-that-shaped-america/pages/default.aspx)

## LIBRARY ACQUIRES SPORTS AUDIO RECORDINGS

The Library has acquired a collection of recorded sports interviews originally broadcast on the radio network program “Sports Byline USA,” between 1988 and 2003. This marks the start of a three-year collaboration with the program’s producers to preserve these historic interviews and make them available on a streaming basis free to the public on the Library’s website.

Launched in 1988, “Sports Byline USA” has presented more than 10,000 sports interviews, including those featuring Mickey Mantle, Hank Aaron, John Elway, Jose Canseco, Charles Barkley, Jimmie Johnson, John Mackey, Archie Griffin, Bonnie Blair, Bill Bradley, John McEnroe and Meadowlark Lemon. These interviews collectively form an invaluable archive of the nation’s athletic heritage and an extensive resource for researchers, fans and sports professionals. The Library subsequently will acquire sports interviews conducted from 2004-2014.

► **MORE:** [www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/13-003.html](http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/13-003.html)

## LIBRARY ISSUES PLAN FOR SOUND PRESERVATION

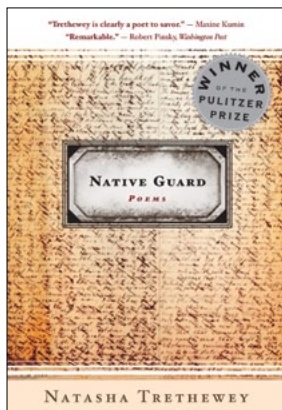
Released in February, “The Library of Congress National Recording Preservation Plan” provides a historic blueprint for saving America’s recorded sound heritage for future generations. The congressionally mandated plan spells out 32 short- and long-term recommendations involving both the public and private sectors and covering infrastructure, preservation, access, education and policy strategies.

The National Recording Preservation Act of 2000 called on the Librarian of Congress to “implement a comprehensive national sound recording preservation program” that “shall increase accessibility of sound recordings for educational purposes.” The Library’s plan is the cumulative result of more than a decade of work by the Library and its National Recording Preservation Board, which comprises representatives from professional organizations of composers, musicians, musicologists, librarians, archivists and the recording industry.

► **MORE:** [www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/13-014.html](http://www.loc.gov/today/pr/2013/13-014.html)

► **PLAN:** [www.loc.gov/today/pr2013/files/pub156.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/today/pr2013/files/pub156.pdf)

**YOU CAN READ THE WORDS OF THE U.S. CONSTITUTION** in a miniature book, on parchment or on a necktie—on items available through the Library of Congress Shop.



### **Native Guard by Natasha Trethewey**

Product # 21108239

Price: \$14.95

This poetry collection summons imagery of black Civil War soldiers and the U.S. Poet Laureate's own family history.



### **What's Congress? (childrens book)**

Product # 21106098

Price: \$7.95

Young people can learn about civics, government and lawmaking in this book about the U.S. Congress.



### **Lincoln Inauguration Bible (facsimile)**

Product # 21120283

Price: \$50

A facsimile of the Bible used at Lincoln's first inauguration on March 4, 1861, and by Barack Obama at both of his inaugurations, which replicates the original in the Library's collections.



### **U.S. Constitution Necktie**

Product # 21304022

Price: \$45

Adorn your neck with this cleverly patterned pure silk necktie.



### **Three Documents of Freedom**

Product # 21601004

Price: \$8

Authentic reproductions of the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence are packaged together in a set.

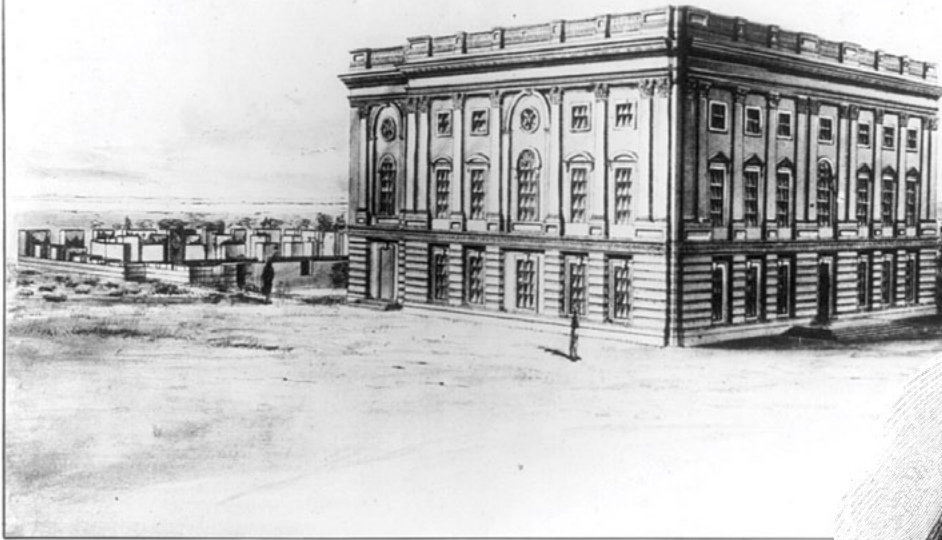
### **MORE INFORMATION**

Order online: [www.loc.gov/shop](http://www.loc.gov/shop)

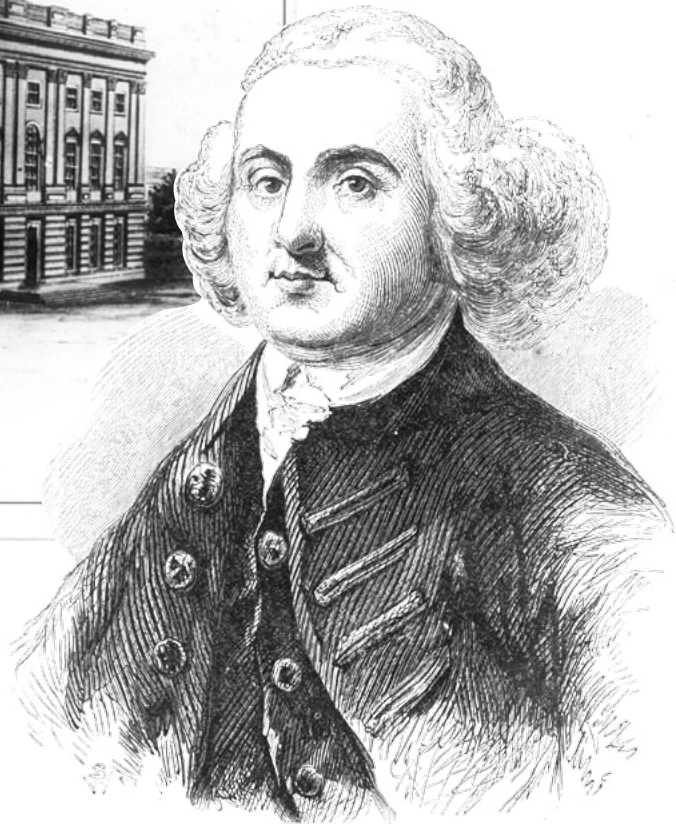
Order by phone: 888.682.3557

Order by fax: 202.707.1771





VIEW OF CAPITOL WHEN FIRST OCCUPIED BY CONGRESS, 1800.



## PREMIER PATRON

**THE U.S. CONGRESS, WHICH CREATED AND HAS SUSTAINED THE LIBRARY FOR CONGRESS FOR MORE THAN 200 YEARS, HAS BEEN THE GREATEST PATRON OF A LIBRARY IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD.**

On April 24, 1800, President John Adams approved an act of Congress that established the Library of Congress, with an appropriation of \$5,000. The funds were to be used “for the purchase of such books as may be necessary for the use of Congress” after it moved to the new capital city of Washington. The act also established the Joint Committee on the Library—the oldest continuing joint committee of the U.S. Congress—to purchase library materials and to devise and establish its regulations. Several months later, the Joint Committee purchased 740 volumes—mostly law books—and three maps from the London firm of Cadell & Davies booksellers.

During its first decade, the Library was sustained with an annual congressional appropriation of \$1,000. In December 1811, President James Madison approved an act of Congress that renewed the Library’s \$1,000 annual appropriation for five years.

Three years later, on Aug. 24, 1814, the British burned the Capitol, and with it the Library’s fledgling collection. Congress once again supported its library by appropriating \$23,950 to purchase Thomas Jefferson’s personal collection of 6,487 books. Thus the foundation was laid for a great national library.

Today, with a fiscal year 2012 appropriation of almost \$630 million per year, the Library of Congress sustains a growing collection of more than 155 million items while supporting the research needs of Congress and many other constituencies around the world, administers the U.S. Copyright law, supports libraries nationwide with bibliographic data and continues to make a growing segment of its vast collection accessible online.

▲ View of the U.S. Capitol in 1800. *Prints and Photographs Division*

John Adams, lithograph, 1870. *Prints and Photographs Division*



Abby Brack Lewis

**IT'S BEEN SEVEN YEARS SINCE I SAT IN THIS SEAT**, #170, in the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress. I was here in 2004 working on the title poem of my collection, "Native Guard." During the mornings, I'd visit the Manuscript Division in the Madison Building to read the letters of Civil War soldiers. And in the afternoons I'd take the notes I'd gathered to the Jefferson Building to work on the poem.

I always chose to sit in the second row at the end by an aisle. I was drawn to this seat because when I looked up from my writing I could see directly in front of me the pillar that bears the word "Poetry." High above me, it seemed a kind of talisman—and also a guide. I began to see in the statue above it a muse, her hand outstretched as if to suggest the path I might follow.

In the beautiful Main Reading Room it's easy to let your thoughts wander. I'd look around at the other readers and researchers, each drawn toward the individual lamp illuminating the pages they were reading or writing upon, and wonder about their work. I'd marvel at the communal solitude that the reading room offers, how it nurtures and encourages contemplation. But it was always when my eyes found again that distant word—Poetry—that I'd be brought back to the task before me, and bend my head again to the rewarding work of making a poem.

The round space of the reading room is a circle of knowledge, all the classical disciplines displayed on the pillars that flank it: "Poetry, Philosophy, Art, Law, Science, Religion, Commerce"—and here, right behind me, the pillar bearing the other word that guided me in my work: "History." Finding that pillar now seems a perfect metaphor for what I'd been trying to do: the past at my back and poetry—what I might make of histories both public and personal—ahead of me. How had I forgotten what must have also been part of my choosing this seat? I think of Robert Penn Warren's words: "Historical sense and poetic sense should not, in the end, be contradictory, for if poetry is the little myth we make, history is the big myth we live, and in our living constantly remake."

Few things seem to have changed since I was last here. Perhaps the biggest change is in the quality of my eyesight. Nearsighted, I had to pause each hour to give my eyes a chance to focus on something beyond the close-up page. And so looking up to the pillars and the words above them was also a respite. Now, when I look up from my seat, I find it much harder to see the distinct letters; they run together in my deteriorated sight. And yet, there is comfort to me even in this: perhaps the blurring of the contours of the word I seek suggests something else about the way I've come to know poetry—how even when we can't quite see it, it is with us, a presence felt.

In the reading room as in our daily lives, I trust that poetry is there.

*April is National Poetry Month, and we celebrate with some words from our new Poet Laureate. Natasha Trethewey is the 19th Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry. Her tenure, 2012–2013, coincides with the 75th anniversary of the Library's Poetry and Literature Center and the establishment of the Consultant-in-Poetry position (changed by a federal law in 1986 to Poet Laureate Consultant in Poetry). Her newest collection of poems, "Thrall," was published in 2012.*





View of statue representing Poetry by John Quincy Adams Ward on the column entablature between two alcoves in the Thomas Jefferson Building's Main Reading Room. *Carol Highsmith*





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## exhibitions

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Aug. 17, 2013

### Danny Kaye and Sylvia Fine: Two Kids from Brooklyn

Feb. 14, 2013–  
Sept. 26, 2013

### The Civil War in America

Nov. 12, 2012–  
Jan. 4, 2014

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